

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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R 161341Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8547
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY HAVANA
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ALGIERS 1526

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, PINS, XA, ET, CG, SS, MO, MR, FR, SP, GW, CU, UR, AG, US
SUBJ: AMBASSADOR'S TOURS D'HORIZON WITH SENIOR GOA OFFICIALS

REFS: A) STATE 107365, B) ALGIERS 0532

1. SUMMARY: IN FIRST TWO MEETINGS HELD WITH SENIOR GOA OFFICIALS IN PREPARATION FOR DEPARTURE ON CONSULTATIONS, AMBASSADOR ELICITED ALGERIAN VIEWS ON WIDE RANGE OF SUBJECTS, INCLUDING ERITREA, WESTERN SAHARA, ZAIRE, FRANCO-ALGERIAN RELATIONS, SPANISH-ALGERIAN RELATIONS, AND BOUMEDIENE'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON. GOA PROFESSES TO BE "AS CONCERNED AS USG OVER CUBAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN AFRICA."
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HOWEVER, IT CONTINUES TO SUSPECT U.S. AND NATO ARE BEHIND FRENCH MOVES IN SAHARA. NONETHELESS, IT SEEKS FIRM RESCHEDULING OF BOUMEDIENE'S VISIT TO U.S., SINCE "ALGERIAN PEOPLE ARE PROFOUNDLY ANTI-COMMUNIST AND VISIT WOULD SERVE TO STRENGTHEN THEIR APPRECIATION OF WHO THEIR REAL FRIENDS ARE." DISCUSSIONS WERE RELAXED, SUGGESTING GREATER GOA ACCEPTANCE OF LEGITIMACY OF POLITICAL DIALOGUE WITH U.S. END SUMMARY.

2. ON MAY 14, I HAD FIRST OF MEETINGS I HAVE REQUESTED WITH GOA PRE-SIDENCY AND MFA OFFICIALS FOR TOURS D'HORIZON PRIOR TO MY MAY 18 DEPARTURE FOR WASHINGTON ON CONSULTATIONS. I MET FOR ONE HOUR EACH WITH AMINE KHERBI, MFA DIRECTOR OF WESTERN EUROPEAN AND NORTH AMERICAN AFFAIRS, AND SLIMANE HOFFMAN, PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR AND NEWLY APPOINTED CHIEF OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS OF FLN PARTY. IN BOTH CASES I ATTEMPTED TO DRAW MY INTERLOCUTORS OUT ON SUBJECTS OF CURRENT INTEREST TO US, PARTICULARLY ERITREA AND RELATED AFRICAN QUESTIONS, FOR WHICH I DREW ON GUIDANCE PROVIDED IN REFTEL A.

3. IN WIDE-RANGING INFORMAL DISCUSSION, KHERBI MADE FOLLOWING POINTS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

A. ON CUBAN INTERVENTION IN ETHIOPIA: OFFICIAL GOA POSITION ON CUBAN MILITARY INTERVENTION ON BEHALF OF ETHIOPIA IS THAT GOA DOES NOT HAVE PROOF THAT SUCH INTERVENTION HAS TAKEN PLACE. IN ANY CASE, ERITREAN QUESTION IS INTERNAL PROBLEM OF SOVEREIGN NATION, AND ETHIOPIA HAS RIGHT TO CALL ON ANYONE FOR ASSISTANCE IN SOLVING IT.

B. ON WESTERN SAHARA: FRENCH MILITARY INTERVENTION IN SAHARA IS SURE TO BE DISCUSSED AT NACCFM IN HAVANA. FRENCH FONMIN DE GUIRINGAUD'S RECENT ATTEMPT IN MADRID TO JUSTIFY FRENCH ACTION IN SAHARA IN TERMS OF STRUGGLE AGAINST SOVIET-CUBAN PENETRATION OF CONTINENT CAUSES GOA TO SPECULATE THAT FRENCH MAY PERHAPS BE FRONTING FOR OTHER WESTERN POWERS. WHILE APPRECIATING U.S. NEUTRALITY ON SAHARA, GOA CANNOT HELP BUT WONDER ABOUT USG SILENCE ON FRENCH MILITARY INTERVENTION.
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C. ON FRANCO-ALGERIAN RELATIONS: GOF HAS PUT FORTH CERTAIN PROPOSALS WHICH GOA IS STILL STUDYING. WHILE GOA HAS TOLD GOF THAT IT DOES DESIRE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS, IT HAS ALSO MADE IT CLEAR THAT SUCH IMPROVEMENT CAN COME ONLY IN CONTEXT OF SOLUTION TO REGIONAL PROBLEM OF MAGHREB, WHICH CONTINUED FRENCH MILITARY PRESENCE ONLY COMPLICATES.

D. ON SPANISH-ALGERIAN RELATIONS: IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT SPAIN HAS "RECALLED" ITS AMBASSADOR TO ALGERIA, WHILE ALGERIAN AMBASSADOR TO SPAIN IS MERELY BACK HOME "ON VACTION". (BY IMPLICATION, GOA IS MORE WILLING THAN GOS TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES.)

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4. HOFFMAN WAS MUCH MORE FRANK AND REVEALING THAN KHERBI, MAKING FOLLOWING POINTS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

A. ON CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA: GOA IS FRANKLY AS CONCERNED AS USG OVER CUBAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN AFRICA (HOFFMAN DID NOT QUESTION ITS EXISTENCE AS KHERBI HAD DONE). HOWEVER, IT IS GOA'S "UNOFFICIAL" VIEW THAT WEST ALLOWED THIS PRESENCE TO ESTABLISH ITSELF BY FAILING TO SUPPORT LEGITIMATE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS.

B. ON WESTERN SAHARA: FRANCE HAS INTERVENED IN WESTERN SAHARA CONFLICT FOR TWO IMPORTANT REASONS: (1) IT WANTS TO PREVENT MAURITANIA FROM FALLING APART POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY, AND (2) IT IS CONCERNED OVER MOROCCO'S GROWING MILITARY PRESENCE IN COUNTRY MOROCCO STILL CLAIMS IS INTERGRAL PART OF GREATER MOROCCO. (THIS CONFIDENTIAL

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SECOND AND SOMEWHAT PARADOXICAL POINT IS NEW TWIST IN GOA'S POLITICAL ANALYSIS*) GOA HAS PROOF THAT NATO IS INVOLVED IN FRENCH MILITARY PLANNING IN SAHARA AND CANNOT HELP BUT BE CONCERNED AND INDIGNANT OVER WHAT IT SEES AS WESTERN DUPLICITY.

C. ON ZAIRE: GOA IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY CONCERNED OVER WEST GERMANY'S LARGELY UNNOTICED PRESENCE IN ZAIRE, WHERE IT IS INVOLVED IN SHORING UP MORIBUND MOBUTU REGIME.

D. ON BOUMEDIENE'S TRIP TO U.S.: IT IS IMPORTANT TO TRY TO GET WHITE HOUSE TO FIX DATE NEXT YEAR FOR BOUMEDIENE'S STATE VISIT. USG MUST UNDERSTAND, IN ITS OFFICIAL DEALINGS WITH GOA, THAT ALGERIAN PEOPLE ARE PROFOUNDLY ANTI-COMMUNIST AND VISIT SUCH AS BOUMEDIENE'S

WOULD SERVE TO STRENGTHEN THEIR APPRECIATION OF WHO THEIR REAL FRIENDS ARE.

E. ON HIS NEW DUTIES WITH FLN: HOFFMAN WILL, IN NEW POSITION AS CHIEF OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS FOR FLN PARTY, WORK HAND IN HAND WITH FONMIN BOUTEFLIKA. (INDEED, LIKE FONMIN, HOFFMAN IS DEPARTING EVENING OF MAY 14 ON AFRICAN JUNKET OF HIS OWN.)

5. COMMENT: IT DOES NOT SURPRISE US THAT HOFFMAN, A SKILLED POLITICAL ANIMAL CLOSE TO BOUMEDIENE, WAS MORE OPEN IN HIS VIEWS THAN KHERBI, A CAUTIOUS DIPLOMAT MADE EVEN MORE CAUTIOUS BY VIRTUE OF SHORT AMOUNT OF TIME HE HAS ACTUALLY BEEN IN CHARGE OF WESTERN EUROPEAN AND NORTH AMERICAN AFFAIRS. HOFFMAN'S EXPRESSION OF CONCERN OVER CUBAN ACTIVITIES IN ETHIOPIA STRIKES US AS GENUINE, EVEN IF IT IS COUCHED IN TERMS THAT PUT BLAME ON US, AND ON SUCH AN ISSUE WE REGARD HIS VIEWS MORE AUTHORITATIVE THAN THOSE OF KHERBI. (SEE BOUMEDIENE'S VIEWS ON SAME SUBJECT IN PAARA 10 OF REFTEL B.) ON WESTERN SAHARA, WE ARE PUZZLED AT HOFFMAN'S ALLEGATIONS OF NATO INVOLVEMENT, ESPECIALLY SINCE HE REFUSED TO OFFER ANY EVIDENCE. GENERAL TONE OF BOTH DISCUSSIONS WAS CORDIAL AND RELAXED, SUGGESTING GOA HAS ACCEPTED LEGITIMACY OF POLITICAL DIALOGUE WITH USG ON EVEN THE MOST SENSITIVE ISSUES. HAYNES

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